

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An alert receiver, comprising:
 - a discriminator (32) which receives encoded signals from a network, the
5 encoded signals for reporting an event from an information source coupled to the network, wherein the discriminator compares the encoded signals, which include codes designating geographic locations, to codes associated with specific localities to determine whether to alert a user; and
 - a warning device (30) responsive to a result of comparing the encoded signals
10 to the codes associated with specific localities.
2. The alert receiver as recited in claim 1, wherein the warning device includes an audible alarm.
- 15 3. The alert receiver as recited in claim 1, wherein the warning device includes a visual alarm.
4. The alert receiver as recited in claim 1, wherein the codes associated with specific localities including codes designating a user's geographic location.
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5. The alert receiver as recited in claim 4, wherein the codes designating geographic locations include Federal Information Processing System (FIPS) codes.
6. The alert receiver as recited in claim 1, wherein the encoded signals include
25 Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME).
7. The alert receiver as recited in claim 1, further comprising a display, which renders textual messages from the encoded signals when a comparison criterion is met.
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8. The alert receiver as recited in claim 1, wherein the event is associated with geographic codes and the codes associated with specific localities designate an aspect of the receiver such that when one or more of the event codes match one or more of the codes associated with specific localities, the warning device responds.
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9. The alert receiver as recited in claim 8, wherein the aspect of the receiver

includes a code designating the receiver's location.

10. The alert receiver as recited in claim 8, wherein the aspect of the receiver includes a plurality of codes designating geographic locations.

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11. The alert receiver as recited in claim 1, wherein the alert receiver is coupled to a head end station through a cable network.

12. The alert receiver as recited in claim 1, wherein the receiver is always on for being responsive to the encoded signals.

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13. The alert receiver as recited in claim 1, wherein the encoded signals include characters inserted into a vertical blanking interval (VBI) of a received television signal.

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14. The alert receiver as recited in claim 1, wherein the encoded signals are included in a data packet inserted into a data stream, wherein the data packet is identifiable as an alert message.

20 15. An alert system, comprising:

a receiver (26) located at a user's location, the user's location having a code designation associated therewith;

the receiver (26) being coupled to a network from which a plurality of encoded reports are provided to the receiver;

25 a discriminator (32) which deciphers the encoded reports to determine those reports corresponding to the code designation associated with the user's location; and

a warning device (30) located at the user's location to inform a user of the reports corresponding to the code designation associated with the user's location.

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16. The alert system as recited in claim 15, wherein the warning device includes at least one of an audible alarm and a visual alarm.

17. The alert system as recited in claim 15, wherein the encoded reports include codes designating geographic locations.

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18. The alert system as recited in claim 17, wherein the codes include Federal Information Processing System (FIPS) codes.

5 19. The alert system as recited in claim 15, wherein the encoded reports include Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME).

20. A method for receiving alert message concerning an emergency situation affecting a user location, the user location having a code designation associated therewith comprising the steps of:

10 receiving the alert message comports to a data format;
deciphering the alert message into a report with a corresponding code designation; and
rendering an alert upon a match of the code designation associated with the user location to the corresponding code designation of the report.

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